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PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: EVALUATION

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirtieth session on the evaluation of the major programme on human settlements

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session to review the implementation of its recommendations following each in-depth evaluation.

The report of the Secretary-General on the in-depth evaluation of the major programme on human settlements was submitted to the Committee at its thirtieth session. The recommendations of the in-depth evaluation, as approved by the Committee, were addressed to the Secretariat units concerned with human settlements, namely, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the relevant units in five regional commissions. The present report makes recommendations on coordination and programme planning in human settlements and the evaluation process.

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its thirtieth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) reviewed the report of the Secretary-General on the in-depth evaluation of the major programme on human settlements being implemented by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (UNCHS) and the units concerned with human settlements of the five regional commissions (E/AC.51/1990/2 and Corr.1). The Committee recommended the adoption of the recommendations contained in paragraph 115 of the report and requested that they should be given due attention by relevant intergovernmental bodies. 1/ With regard to recommendations on the dissemination of information, the Committee requested 2/ that the attention of the relevant intergovernmental bodies should also be drawn to paragraph 29 of the Secretary-General's report on the application of evaluation findings (A/45/204).

2. The present report has been prepared in accordance with the decision taken by CPC at its twenty-second session, in 1982, that triennial reviews should be conducted to determine the extent to which its recommendations on in-depth evaluations had been implemented. 3/ As was the case with the past triennial reviews, the present report is based on documentation review, information submitted by the units concerned, and interviews, where feasible, for clarification and verification purposes and to gain additional information. As in the in-depth evaluation, questionnaires were sent in August/September 1992 to national focal points for UNCHS in those countries which were members of CPC at the time of the evaluation, representing a geographically diverse sample of Member States approved by CPC. 4/ Questionnaires were also sent to all national focal points for the programmes of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) as well as to focal points for the follow-up to resolution 268 (XLIV) of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) does not have national focal points for its programme on human settlements, as discussed in paragraph 20 below. As of 1 March 1993, responses had been received from the national focal points or contact persons as follows:

National focal points/contact persons for	Number of questionnaires sent	Replies received as of 1 February 1993	Response rate (per cent)
UNCHS	31	18	58.1
ECA	39	6	15.4
ECE	31	14	45.2
ESCAP	37	10	27.0
ESCWA	13	5	38.5

In six cases the responses consisted of regret letters only. Because they either had been acting as focal points only a short period of time or no longer carried out those functions, they felt they could not participate in the triennial review. Since all the national focal points for the ESCWA programme have been appointed only recently, they had difficulties in completing the questionnaire.

3. In order to raise the response rate, the reminders were dispatched in October/November 1992. Requests for assistance were also sent to the permanent missions concerned in New York in November 1992.

4. A different set of questionnaires was sent to 25 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) whose representatives had been interviewed in 1989 for the in-depth evaluation. As of 1 March 1993, 10 NGOs had responded. A shorter version of the questionnaire for NGOs was distributed to the participants of an NGO conference entitled "Regional Conflicts: Threats to World Peace and Progress", organized by the Department of Public Information (DPI) from 9 to 11 September 1992. Of the 88 NGOs that responded, 60 were either directly or indirectly involved in some or many fields of activities related to human settlements. A group of New York representatives of international NGOs active in the field of human settlements was also consulted by means of structured interviews and group discussions.

5. The recommendations contained in the evaluation report were related to issues concerning coordination, programme planning, programme results and the dissemination of information. The present report is organized around these issues and the issue of intergovernmental review of the evaluation report and the CPC recommendations emanating from it. Assessments of implementation are given in paragraphs 18, 19, 34, 35, 47 and 50 below.

I. COORDINATION

A. Implementation of recommendations

Recommendation (a): The Centre should use more effectively the potential of existing coordination mechanisms within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Coordination in performing its function of coordinating human settlement activities of the United Nations system, for example through specialized subsidiary machinery of the Committee in the manner used for system-wide coordination of activities on statistics and on women.

6. This recommendation was based on the findings that, with the exception of the ESCAP unit, the regional units had considered better coordination arrangements were necessary; and that, regarding system-wide coordination, a survey of coordination mechanisms and procedures of other programmes had found existing channels for coordination in the United Nations system had been utilized effectively by a number of organizational entities that, like UNCHS, did not have full membership status in the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), for example, the United Nations Statistical Office and the Branch for the Advancement of Women of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

7. UNCHS participated in the meetings of ACC subsidiary bodies on various subjects, such as those on rural development and water resources, and cooperated with several agencies in the execution of special programmes and projects related to human settlements. It collaborated, for example, in the Urban Management Programme with the World Bank and UNDP; organized, with UNIDO, the Second Consultation on Building Materials Industry in November 1991; and since 1991 has been a member of the Panel of Experts on Environmental Management for Vector Control, which is composed of the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme and UNCHS. UNCHS reports that these cooperation arrangements have been successful both for planning and implementation owing to several factors, including: (a) the issue or topic of collaborative work was clearly defined; (b) the collaborative arrangements were based on precise objectives, identified beneficiaries and target groups, precisely specified output(s), and defined inputs; and (c) monitoring and evaluation was a built-in feature.

> Recommendation (b): Joint programming of activities should be attempted in the four sub-fields of human settlements in which the Centre and all regional units have been involved namely, settlement policies and strategies, settlement planning, development of indigenous construction sector, and human settlements institutions and management.

8. This recommendation was based on the findings that most of the units concerned with human settlements were not ready to launch thematic planning but considered that joint programming in specific sub-fields could be attempted as a step towards thematic planning in order to achieve better coordination.

9. In its report to the thirteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements, UNCHS proposed to concentrate its joint programming efforts in the sub-fields of national policies and instruments, and integrated settlements management. 5/ ECE reports that at the meeting of its Executive Secretary and the Executive Director of UNCHS in February 1992, it was agreed that the two entities would coordinate at the programming stage. However, no significant effect has been produced because there is little interest at the intergovernmental level and at the ECE secretariat level, there is little opportunity and no travel funds available to have the intensive cooperation with UNCHS required to conduct joint programming effectively. ECE and ESCWA agreed in December 1991 that they would coordinate, especially in the field of housing, through early exchange of information and participation in each other's relevant meetings. However, scarce resources have, as of the end of 1992, prevented those units from translating these plans into practice. The Joint ESCAP/UNCHS unit also reports that it has not conducted joint programming with UNCHS for similar reasons. ECLAC reports that it undertook joint programming with UNCHS through the Joint ECLAC/UNCHS Unit on Human Settlements in the past. However, the joint unit currently exists in name only because UNCHS redeployed its staff member from the joint unit to Nairobi in May 1992 as the result of a reduction in the extrabudgetary posts of UNCHS in the biennium 1992-1993 from the previous biennium. UNCHS also stopped outposting staff members in ECA in 1987-1988 and in ESCWA in 1989.

Recommendation (c): In order to improve coordination in planning human-settlements activities, pre-planning consultations between the Centre and the regional units should be resumed. To the extent that budgetary restraints permit, representatives of all the regional units should also attend sessions of the Commission on Human Settlements.

10. This recommendation was proposed because pre-planning consultations in Nairobi for the purpose of examining and harmonizing draft work programmes of UNCHS and the regional units had been discontinued. Few regional units had attended the sessions of the Commission on Human Settlements in the late 1980s.

11. Pre-planning consultations in the manner that had been undertaken prior to the financial crisis have not been resumed. However, UNCHS reports that coordination in planning of human settlements activities has been achieved through other means, such as through consultations with regional units during missions on other business, attending meetings of regional units, and exchange of draft work programmes. On the other hand, most of the regional units consider that coordination in planning has not reached a satisfactory level, and current methods are not very effective. For example, regional units' draft work programmes are sent to UNCHS, but their views on the UNCHS work programme have not been solicited. The usefulness of ad hoc consultations during missions and meetings is not clear since these consultations are necessarily on a bilateral basis and may or may not contribute to the overall coordination of activities among UNCHS and the regional units.

12. The thirteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements was held at Harare from 29 April to 8 May 1991. No representative of the regional units attended the session owing to lack of travel funds for this purpose.

Recommendation (d): In order to have the relevant statistical data on a more timely basis, the units concerned with human settlements should request the United Nations Statistical Office to transmit copies of replies from national statistical offices to them. Where data are needed and it is established that they are not already collected, collection should be initiated. In planning such collection of new data from member States, due attention should be paid to the collection arrangements in closely related fields. A coordinated approach to data collection should be used so that the result is cost-effective and generates comparable statistics.

13. The Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (UNSTAT), formerly the United Nations Statistical Office, is designated as the focal point for the collection of statistical data for the United Nations. The advantages of this arrangement are the economy of having one office responsible for the collection of statistical data for all sectors for the United Nations and the avoidance of possible confusion. The major disadvantages are the delay in the collection of data and the omission of certain data relevant to the work of UNCHS and the regional units. The above recommendation was made in order to improve the timeliness of data and to avoid confusion which might arise if many units started collecting statistical data themselves.

14. Since 1990, UNCHS has requested UNSTAT to collect needed statistics and has made the necessary arrangements to obtain copies of replies as they are

received. They have also cooperated in the development of the Human Settlements Statistics Questionnaire, which was sent to national statistical offices in February 1992. The data provided by UNSTAT and other bodies such as UNEP and the World Bank and several other specialized agencies provide the basis for a computerized database (HSDB.stat) and a number of statistical publications of UNCHS. The database is being modified by ECA for its own use. UNCHS has also established a City Data Programme (CDP) in 1991 after being designated as the appropriate institution to be entrusted with global coordination and repository function for urban data at the meeting held with the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme in 1989. Data collected from technical cooperation projects and programmes will become the main components of the CDP database, which will be made available in PC-diskettes. ESCAP reports that it plans to adopt for its regional studies the shelter sector indicators being developed by UNCHS after they are finalized.

15. Some of the regional units have initiated or are planning new data collection, though not necessarily the primary data. ECA assembles basic data from several specialized agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and the ECA divisions of statistics and population since some of the statistical publications issued by UNSTAT are not updated frequently enough to be useful. For example, the latest issue of the Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics is for 1983 and the latest issue of the Construction Statistics Yearbook is for 1985. Data collection by the ECA unit is currently from secondary sources; this does not present compatibility problems. The ECLAC unit, in consultation with the ECLAC Statistics and Projection Division, UNSTAT and ECE, is developing a project on "Environmental indicators on human settlements for policy-making in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean". The ECLAC unit expects that this project, once completed, should provide the suitable data. ECE also supported ECLAC in the Global Energy 2000 programme, which covers mainly human settlements. The ECE unit, using its own questionnaire, has collected data on housing stock and new construction from the national statistical offices in the ECE region. All data collection activities in ECE in the field of housing/human settlements statistics are reviewed in detail at intergovernmental meetings before being initiated, and UNSTAT generally participates in these meetings. ECE reports that this arrangement has proved to be valuable for coordinating work among the agencies.

> Recommendation (e): Since the Commission on Human Settlements recommended that national policies and instruments should be the high priority area of UNCHS (Habitat) in the next medium-term plan, the Centre should increase cooperation with the regional units in the collection and analysis of national human settlements information.

16. This recommendation was based on the finding that there had not been much sharing of efforts in the collection and analysis of human settlements information.

17. UNCHS is in the process of creating a Human Settlements Policies Database (HSPD). Once completed, it will be made available to the regional units. UNCHS also reports that it has provided the regional units with the Global Shelter Strategy Monitoring Guidelines for National Shelter Strategies and receives from the regional units the results of their regional reviews based on

the Guidelines. However, replies of the regional units indicate that the Guidelines have not been extensively used. For example, ECE has prepared its own Housing Policy Guidelines since the UNCHS Guidelines do not adequately fit the needs of the ECE member countries. ESCWA reports that it has not used the UNCHS Guidelines since UNCHS is directly following the progress in the only country which is implementing the National Shelter Strategies in the ESCWA region. Only ESCAP uses the UNCHS Guidelines to prepare reports on the implementation of the Global Shelter Strategy to the Year 2000.

B. Assessment of implementation

18. In addition to the examples mentioned in the preceding sections, UNCHS cooperated with units within the Secretariat and agencies of the United Nations system on many other activities. More detailed accounts are given in the document entitled "Coordination and cooperation with agencies and organizations within the United Nations system" (HS/C/13/12), and the joint progress report of the Executive Directors of UNCHS and UNEP (HS/C/13/11). Most of the cooperation efforts were in the form of co-sponsoring conferences and other meetings, submission of reports and studies to the relevant meetings and joint execution of projects/programmes. While it is noted that these efforts are valuable and produce good results, they contribute only to bilateral coordination (on an activity-to-activity or agency-to-agency basis) and not necessarily to overall coordination in programme planning. Replies of the regional units indicate that the situation in this regard may have worsened since 1990. As indicated in paragraph 11 above, before the United Nations financial crisis of the late 1980s, meetings for the purpose of pre-planning consultations were held in Nairobi among UNCHS and the regional units, and the regional units attended sessions of the Commission on Human Settlements, but these practices have not been resumed. The importance of coordination in programme planning is recognized, but it has not been given priority by the units concerned. Organizations generally prefer to concentrate their resources more on their substantive work rather than coordination during periods of financial constraint. However, this is exactly the period when coordination in programme planning becomes critical to ensure efficient use of resources by avoiding the duplication of work. Such coordination is also necessary for pooling limited resources and allocating them to priority areas in order to achieve as great an impact as possible. One regional unit has suggested that a thorough review of the whole issue of coordination and cooperation between UNCHS and the regional units be undertaken. It is expected that the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), to be held in 1996, will formulate a global plan of action which will include "recommendations on ways in which the role of the United Nations and existing institutional arrangements for international cooperation and coordination in human settlements can be strengthened" (General Assembly resolution 47/180, para. 2 (b) (vii)). The preparations for this Conference provide the opportunity for UNCHS and the regional units jointly to identify and agree on their respective roles, and on mechanisms for coordination and cooperation. Such agreement would also be pertinent to the issue of how to implement chapter 7 of Agenda 21, on "promoting sustainable human settlement development", adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

19. With respect to cooperation in implementing programmes, the situation is better. UNCHS and UNSTAT closely cooperate in collecting human settlements data from national statistical offices. Not all the needs of the units concerned with human settlements are met by the data provided by UNSTAT, and some units are collecting or planning to collect primary data themselves. However, UNSTAT is consulted by the units to ensure a coordinated approach to data collection. Cooperation in implementation of activities has started between the regional units, namely, ECE with ESCWA and ECLAC. A statistical database created by UNCHS has been adopted by ECA with modification. However, there is room for improvement. For example, UNCHS is in the process of creating the Human Settlement Policy Database, but the regional units have not as yet been involved in the design of the database even though they collect information from the national offices in their respective regions for their own research and policy analysis. In order to avoid duplication of work, it is advisable for all units to contribute to the database. All units should also participate in its design stage to avoid incompatibility of data.

II. PROGRAMME PLANNING

A. Implementation of recommendations

Recommendation (f): ECLAC and ESCWA should establish national focal points composed of governmental experts.

20. In 1990, two regional programmes on human settlements, namely those of ESCWA and ECLAC, did not have national focal points. ESCWA established in 1992 national focal points for its programme. The functions of these national focal points at this stage are to communicate information regarding the ESCWA work programme and to channel other information in their respective countries. ECLAC did not establish national focal points because, in its opinion, the national focal points for UNCHS suit the needs of ECLAC in a general context. For specific projects, ECLAC selects its focal points on a case-by-case basis according to the subjects to be addressed. In addition to focal points for the follow-up to ESCAP resolution 268 (XLIV), ESCAP established contacts for a group of activities, such as urbanization, CITYNET (Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements), building components industry, intermediate cities, rural and sub-national planning, solid waste management, housing finance for low-income households. Those contacts are composed of individuals from the Governments, and academic and NGO communities. They serve as resource persons whenever their specific expertise is needed, and as conduits of information to their organizations. In a few cases involving ECA and ESCAP, the government officials on the lists provided by these units informed the Central Evaluation Unit that they were no longer national focal points or contact persons. More frequent updating of the lists of national focal points appears to be necessary. ESCAP periodically notifies UNCHS of the changes in its focal points; the other units do so only irregularly.

Recommendation (g): All units concerned should have systematic consultations with Governments including appropriate national focal points before preparing proposed work programmes so that Governments' views might be more accurately reflected in the proposals.

21. This recommendation was based on the findings that views of Governments were not systematically sought before the preparation of draft work programmes. Member States in general provided views on the work programmes only after they had been prepared, at intergovernmental meetings. Systematic consultations with government officials before preparing proposed work programmes would be necessary to assess the needs and priorities of the member States and to reflect more comprehensive views in the proposals.

22. Governmental experts are actively involved in planning human settlements activities of ECE and its secretariat. Replies of national focal points and the Secretariat units indicate that pre-planning consultations with governmental experts have not been undertaken by these units, except ECE, on a systematic basis. These units assess the needs and priorities of member States through such means as review of national publications, or ad hoc consultations with governmental experts at seminars and expert group meetings, and during missions. UNCHS considers that it is not appropriate to consult national focal points on work programmes during the preparatory process since they have been "designated for the exchange of information only and they are not decision makers competent to give the kind of advice referred to". 6/ However, more than 50 per cent of the national focal points who responded to the questionnaire were also delegates to the thirteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements. In any case, views of national focal points, who are usually governmental experts in human settlements, are useful for assessing the needs and priorities of the member States; and proposed work programmes that reflect more comprehensive views would facilitate the formal decision-making by intergovernmental bodies.

> Recommendation (h): In view of the fact that ECLAC and ESCWA do not have specialized intergovernmental bodies in human settlements, they should find some means, such as expert group meetings, to obtain an expert review of their draft work programmes before submitting them to their respective Commissions. Alternatively, they may take advantage of regional seminars and workshops for this purpose.

23. ECLAC reports that consultations on its work programme were undertaken during the Regional Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in March 1992. This Meeting was organized with the assistance of UNCHS. A similar meeting will be held in 1994, at which ECLAC intends to collect information to be used for the preparation of the work programme for 1996-1997. ESCWA has not organized any substantive meeting covering human settlements issues during the period under review. However, it intends to use the occasion of the meetings scheduled for 1993 to solicit reviews on its work programme. Information obtained during the Symposium on Low-cost Housing in the Arab Region, held in October 1992, was used in the preparation of the work programme for 1994-1995.

> Recommendation (i): The ESCAP unit should start negotiations with potential donors early enough to provide its Commission and CPC with information on projects for which donors have been identified; this should assist the Commission and CPC to have a better idea of the actual components of the secretariat's work programme.

24. The in-depth evaluation found that, unlike the ECE unit, which included in its proposed work programme only those extrabudgetary activities for which donor countries had already been identified, the ESCAP unit included in its proposed work programme to the Commission all the activities that had been approved by the Project Review Committee and the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives. In 1989, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) requested ESCAP to take appropriate measures to ensure that a more realistic extrabudgetary resource forecast would be submitted in the future. 7/

25. The ESCAP unit states that it has implemented this recommendation in par : donors indicate their areas of interest in the form of a catalogue; ESCAP then submits project documents for funding which emanate from its work programme and refer to the areas identified by the donor countries. Projects under implementation are regularly reviewed through the progress reports to the Commission.

> Recommendation (j): The Secretariat units concerned with human settlements should present to their intergovernmental bodies a clear picture of their resource situation so that mandates given could be more commensurate with the available resources.

26. The purpose of this recommendation was to avoid over-programming. During the biennium 1986-1987, no units concerned with human settlements completed 100 per cent of the programmed outputs. While the implementation rates of the ECA, ECE and ESCWA units were above or about the average of all programmes of their respective Commissions, those of the ECLAC and ESCAP units were lower than the average. The implementation rate of UNCHS was 66 per cent, which was slightly higher than the overall average of 61 per cent.

27. The units concerned report that they have presented to their intergovernmental bodies a clear picture of their resource situation. However, many responding focal points stated that they did not have enough information on this matter. For example, of the 10 UNCHS focal points who had attended the thirteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements, 6 stated that they did not have enough information to judge, 2 stated they did not consider that UNCHS had presented a clear picture on the financial situation, and 2 stated that they had received a clear picture. In the case of ECE, only 4 of the 12 respondents to the question considered that they had a clear picture.

28. As an indirect method to determine whether over-programming has continued, the implementation rates for the programmes on human settlements for the bienniums 1988-1989 and 1990-1991 were examined. Table 1 shows a marked improvement in the implementation rates in the 1990-1991 biennium, compared to those of the previous biennium. These implementation rates indicate that the units concerned are making efforts to avoid over-programming. The situation in ESCWA in 1990-1991 was not under the control of the programme managers.

Table 1. Human settlements: implementation rates for the bienniums 1988-1989 and 1990-1991

(In percentage)

	1988-1989	1990-1991
United Nations average	83	80
UNCHS	50	90
ECA as a whole	83	92
Human settlements	100	100
ECE as a whole	78	87
Human settlements	62	83
ECLAC as a whole	80	95
Human settlements	85	100
ESCAP as a whole	69	76
Human settlements	25	80
ESCWA as a whole	57	28
Human settlements	40	0

Source: Programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1988-1989 (A/45/218 and Add.1) and for the biennium 1990-1991 (A/47/159 and Add.1).

Recommendation (k): In order to ensure the implementation of the recommendations arising from internal monitoring and self-evaluation exercises, all the units concerned should establish mechanisms for follow-up purposes.

29. This recommendation was based on the findings that although many of the units concerned had made progress in the development of evaluation and monitoring mechanisms, none of these units had in 1990 a mechanism for systematic follow-up to recommendations arising from self-evaluation exercises.

30. UNCHS reports that a regular budget post of Evaluation Officer was abolished in the budgetary cuts in 1991, and after that time an Evaluation Officer's post was financed from extrabudgetary sources until July 1992. At that time two staff members were designated to undertake, on a part-time basis, the coordination of self-evaluation exercises and the monitoring of the implementation of recommendations arising from such evaluations. ECA reports that its Executive Secretary reviews with programme managers the implementation of programmes and projects every six months, including the results of monitoring and evaluation. In 1989 the ECA unit concerned with human settlements issued its first self-evaluation report (E/ECA/HUS/46), on subprogramme 1, which included eight specific recommendations addressed to programme managers. An excerpt of the report is included in the document entitled "Self-evaluation in ECA" (E/ECA/CM.16/30). ECA reports that two of these eight recommendations have not yet been implemented owing to financial

constraints. ECA evaluated its other subprogramme in 1992. ECE reports that the results of self-evaluation are reflected in the report of its Committee on Human Settlements at its fifty-third session (ECE/HBP/86, paras. 38-44). It appears, however, that the unit has not yet established a follow-up mechanism. ECLAC is in the process of installing an evaluation system, and a computerized management information system, which will permit a more detailed and coordinated supervision of the implementation of its programmes and projects. ESCAP evaluated all subprogrammes on human settlements in the 1984-1991 medium-term plan period. The ESCAP unit does not consider a formal follow-up mechanism necessary since it is a small unit consisting of three staff members. If the implementation of the recommendations of self-evaluation requires action by other units, the ESCAP Executive Secretary may set up a special task force or discuss the issue at the semi-monthly senior staff meeting. ESCWA reports that since the staffing situation of its unit concerned with human settlements has been irregular since 1990, no follow-up mechanism has been established.

> Recommendation (1): Clear procedures should be established to ensure the linkages between research and non-research activities at the working level.

31. CPC noted in 1984 that "national priorities, as indicated in the patterns of requests for technical cooperation and other operational assistance, differed from the priorities of programmes which were formulated and approved at the global level", and recommended that a way of linking global priorities of national needs should be found. 8/ In addition to this recommendation of CPC, recommendation (1) above was based on the findings that research and development activities of UNCHS addressed both long-term and short-term objectives while operational activities addressed the specific immediate needs of a given country, and therefore, the link between the two activities was not direct; growth in certain areas of technical cooperation projects was not matched by the growth in the same areas in research.

32. This recommendation was addressed mainly to UNCHS which has a large number of staff members involved in both research and non-research activities. UNCHS reports that it integrates research and non-research activities at the stage of developing its work programme; it includes components of research, training, operational and information activities under each substantive area. It has also established special task forces, such as the one on the implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000.

33. Since regional units are small, it is easier for them to integrate these activities once they are programmed. For example, ESCAP reports that many of their activities take the following pattern: (a) preparation of country case studies; (b) review of the case studies at a regional policy seminar; (c) preparation of policy guidelines using the inputs of experts at the seminar; (d) provision of advisory services to interested Governments based on the policy guidelines. All other units make efforts to integrate these two kinds of activities at the programming stage and/or by using the information gathered during the implementation of one type of activity as inputs into another type of activity.

B. Assessment of implementation

34. Three recommendations of the in-depth evaluation (recommendations (f), (g) and (h)) were directly or indirectly related to measures for assessing the needs and priorities of member States. The units concerned deployed various means for the purpose of such assessments. However, systematic pre-planning consultations with governmental experts for this purpose, including the national focal points, have not been undertaken by most of the units. NGOs were not consulted on their needs in a systematic way. The preparatory process for Habitat II will require participation of not only member States and international organizations but also "all other interested groups, such as non-governmental organizations, civic and community groups, academic institutions, professional bodies, the business community and others". 9/ This approach of soliciting views from a broad range of interested parties could be generally applied to programme planning of United Nations work in the field of human settlements, though necessarily in a more limited fashion. There are a few cases in which the changes in the national focal points have not been noted by the units concerned. More frequent updating of the lists of national focal points is necessary to ensure that information sent is reaching the right officials.

35. In comparison to the recommendations discussed in the previous paragraph, other recommendations concerning programme planning have been more fully implemented. As the improvement in the programme implementation rates for the biennium 1990-1991 indicates, it appears that units concerned have made efforts to avoid over-programming. Several units have established follow-up mechanisms or procedures in order to ensure the implementation of recommendations arising from self-evaluation. All the units concerned make efforts to integrate research and non-research activities at the programming stage. Owing to insufficient information, it is not possible to determine whether or not the current procedures to link these two activities at the working level are adequate.

III. DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

A. Implementation of recommendations

Recommendation (m): A single page reader survey questionnaire should be inserted in all major human settlements publications, the results periodically assessed and appropriate changes made in the publications.

36. This recommendation was based on the findings concerning programme results, but, since it relates to dissemination of information, it is included in this section. The in-depth evaluation found that the outputs of the major programme which reached end-users had been utilized and considered useful by many. However, distribution of outputs to national focal points was problematical for all but the ECE unit; this resulted in a lack of awareness on the part of many national focal points of many United Nations human settlements activities. As the experience of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development had indicated, a single-page questionnaire inserted in publications could be a useful tool to obtain user feedback on a routine basis, even with

low response rates. UNCHS had decided to insert a short questionnaire in its new publications; the recommendation proposed that this practice be generalized.

37. UNCHS did not insert short questionnaires in its publications during the period under review. It is, however, currently developing a survey questionnaire. In 1992, ECA and ESCWA started inserting a single-page questionnaire in their publications on human settlements. In addition, the African regional network of information and for dissemination of documentation on human settlements, which is currently being established, will facilitate periodic assessment of ECA publications. ECE inserted a survey questionnaire in its Annual bulletin of housing and building statistics for Europe, issued in 1991. A meeting on human settlements statistics scheduled for May 1993 will discuss changes to be made to the Bulletin based on the results of the survey and comments collected through other means. ECLAC will conduct a readership survey after its mailing list is updated. ESCAP has not undertaken a readership survey because of the lack of resources and the expected low response rates.

> Recommendation (n): Units concerned should develop an overall strategy for information dissemination. To this end, suggestions made by the national focal points and non-governmental organizations should be ... taken into consideration.

38. During the course of the in-depth evaluation, national focal points and NGOs made a number of suggestions for improving the dissemination of information and increasing the usefulness of such information; those were listed in paragraphs 103 and 104 of the in-depth evaluation report (E/AC.51/1990/2 and Corr.1). These suggestions included, inter alia, improvement in the timeliness of distribution of publications and information, more frequent exchange of views and contact with focal points, better editing and use of executive summaries, increase in audiovisual materials, use of local information centres and media, better use of NGO channels for distribution and an increase in language versions of materials.

39. UNCHS reports that its overall strategy for information dissemination has focused on the following three major objectives: (a) to make Governments aware of findings resulting from its activities with a view to stimulating Governments' search for suitable solutions to human settlements problems; (b) to reach special target groups; and (c) to create a suitable forum for discussion by issuing periodicals and organizing meetings. One such meeting, on Governmental-Non-governmental Cooperation in the Field of Human Settlements, was held in The Hague in November 1992, pursuant to resolution 13/16 of the Commission on Human Settlements. As mentioned in paragraph 37, ECA is in the process of establishing a regional information network on human settlements. ECE has established a strategy for information dissemination, which has, inter alia, led to the replacement of the human settlements survey by annual analytical notes on specific issues agreed upon by the ECE Committee on Human Settlements, in particular the provision of information to assist countries in transition. ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA continue to rely on the flexible use of mailing lists for wide or targeted distribution of publications.

40. The units concerned report that they have adopted all or most of the suggestions by the national focal points and NGOs during the in-depth evaluation. Replies of the national focal points and NGOs to the surveys for the present report, however, indicate that the efforts made by the secretariat units in adopting those suggestions have not yet had a significant effect. None of the suggested areas received the rating of "significant improvement since 1990" from the majority of the respondents. "Some improvement since 1990" or "no improvement" are the most frequently used ratings by most of the respondents.

> Recommendation (o): An overhaul of mailing lists should be undertaken by all units. With the assistance of national focal points, appropriate governmental experts in each country should be identified. Major academic and research institutions in each country and concerned non-governmental organizations should also be identified. After identifying the potential users, specialized mailing lists should be prepared in order to ensure that users will receive those materials which are of interest to them on a timely basis. ...

41. The in-depth evaluation found that there was a need to develop a better system of identifying and reaching potential users since publications of some of the units were not sent to some member States and a number of NGOs were receiving publications not relevant to their specific fields of interests.

42. UNCHS undertook an overhaul of its mailing lists in May-June 1992 by requesting its regional, subnational and national offices for a review of names and addresses in the existing lists. In ECA, a tentative list of major academic and research institutes in each country and concerned NGOs was attached to the document containing ECA guidelines on establishing the regional network of information and for dissemination of documentation mentioned in paragraph 37 above. The document is being circulated to ECA's national focal points, and it will revise its mailing list taking into account their comments. ECE updates annotated lists of national focal points, main libraries and research institutes. It has experienced difficulties in establishing regular links with some countries in transition where institutional arrangements have not yet been finalized. ECLAC started updating its mailing list in September 1992. ESCAP and ESCWA have computerized mailing lists which can sort names by several descriptors such as country and subjects of interest. Although most units had updated their mailing lists since the in-depth evaluation, the Central Evaluation Unit's review of the latest lists indicates that further improvement is necessary since, for example, the United Nations Council for Namibia, which was disbanded in 1990, is still listed in one mailing list, and eight member States of one regional commission are missing from its mailing lists. Replies of national focal points indicate that units concerned did not ask on a systematic basis the assistance of national focal points to identify national experts to be included in mailing lists.

> Recommendation (p): The Centre should endeavour, to the extent that resources are available, to increase the translation of its publications into other languages. ...

43. This recommendation was proposed because many UNCHS publications were available in English only and several NGOs cited the lack of the appropriate

language versions of publications as the reason for not using United Nations information on human settlements.

44. Until 1991 documents for sessions of the Commission on Human Settlements were translated into all official languages except Chinese. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/185 C, section XIII, documents of the sessions of the Commission are now also translated into Chinese. In addition, in the biennium 1990-1991, 10 technical publications were translated into French, 8 into Spanish, 7 into Arabic, 3 into Russian and 1 into Chinese. However, the majority of those listed in the most recent UNCHS publication catalogue issued in 1991 are available in English only. UNCHS reports that although the demand for publications in Spanish had increased, it could not meet the demand due to the lack of a Spanish translator.

> Recommendation (g): In order to increase media coverage, cooperation between the United Nations information centres and the units concerned should be increased.

45. This recommendation was proposed because the in-depth evaluation concluded that the news media had been effective in promoting the understanding of human settlements issues by policy makers and the general public in those instances where the United Nations information centres (UNICs) had provided relevant information to the media.

46. During the period under review, UNCHS kept in close contact with the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and UNICs. UNCHS publications and other materials received by UNICs were disseminated to local media, especially on the occasion of World Habitat Day. UNIC reference librarians made these materials available to their users. UNIC newsletters publicized the work of UNCHS when information on projects or reports were received. The units concerned with human settlements in ECLAC and ESCAP cooperated with the information services in Santiago and Bangkok respectively. Articles prepared by these two units were incorporated by the respective information services in press releases and supplements in local newspapers. ECA expects that its regional network of information will increase cooperation with UNICs. ESCWA did not use the services of UNICs because ESCWA has its own information officer. It appears that some of the regional units are not aware of the full range of services provided by UNICs in the countries of their region.

B. Assessment of implementation

47. Some recommendations under this section have not been implemented fully by most of the units concerned, and those implemented fully have not yet produced significant effects. In the case of readership surveys, only one unit has completed a new survey since 1990, but others either have started inserting survey questionnaires in their publications recently or are planning new surveys. Most of the units have not developed overall strategies for information dissemination during the period under review. Further efforts are necessary to implement recommendations by national focal points and NGOs concerning information dissemination, as well as to make mailing lists a useful tool to reach targeted audiences in each country.

IV. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF THE IN-DEPTH EVALUATION

A. Implementation of recommendations

48. After its consideration of the recommendations contained in the in-depth evaluation report, CPC requested that these recommendations should be given due attention by the relevant intergovernmental bodies and that attention should also be drawn to paragraph 29 of the Secretary-General's report on the application of evaluation findings, which concerned the importance of dissemination strategy for reaching end-users. In accordance with this decision of CPC, the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Finance in August 1990 transmitted the CPC recommendations and these reports to the Executive Director of UNCHS and the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions.

49. The recommendations of the in-depth evaluation report on human settlements and the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on them were reproduced in the report of the Executive Director of UNCHS on coordination (HS/C/13/14/Add.2), which was submitted to the Commission on Human Settlements in 1991. Comments of UNCHS on the recommendations were also included in the report. The in-depth evaluation report itself was not submitted to the Commission. UNCHS also orally informed the Commission of paragraph 29 in the Secretary-General's report on the application of evaluation findings, and copies of this report were made available on request. In paragraph 4 of resolution 13/15, "Coordination matters", the Commission requested the Executive Director to submit to CPC the text of the resolution together with the relevant parts of the Executive Director's report "as the Commission's response to the Committee's recommendations on coordination matters at its thirteenth session and its decision regarding new complementary areas for cooperation among the organizations of the United Nations system in the human settlements". 10/ ECE orally informed the ECE Committee on Human Settlements of the in-depth evaluation's recommendations. In the case of ECA, the recommendations of the in-depth evaluation report were sent to national focal points before the 6th meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment. No intergovernmental meetings on human settlements were held for ESCAP during the period under review. ESCWA reports that the in-depth evaluation report was not reviewed by ESCWA intergovernmental bodies because they did not consider the programme on human settlements a high priority area; however, recent events in the region, including reconstruction of war-devastated settlements and the problem of housing displaced persons, have become pressing issues, and may well lead to a reconsideration of priorities. Only 9 out of 53 national focal points or contact persons had been informed of the in-depth evaluation report by the substantive units.

B. Assessment of implementation

50. It appears that, of the specialized intergovernmental bodies concerned, only the Commission on Human Settlements reviewed the recommendations of CPC emanating from the in-depth evaluation report on human settlements. In future in-depth evaluations, it may be necessary to use different means of transmitting evaluation reports and CPC recommendations on them to relevant bodies.

V. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES IN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

A. Suggestions of national focal points

51. In the course of the present triennial review, national focal points made the following suggestions for improving United Nations activities in human settlements:

(a) Clarify the roles of UNCHS and the units in the regional commissions concerned with human settlements;

(b) Promote and support networking activities among national focal points for each unit;

(c) Increase technical assistance for identification and formulation of projects, and assistance in obtaining funds for national execution of projects;

(d) Increase cooperation among organizations concerned with human settlements within the United Nations system, as well as between the United Nations and organizations outside the system.

B. Suggestions of NGOs

52. The following suggestions were made as part of NGO replies to surveys conducted for the present review:

(a) UNCHS should redefine the role of its offices in New York and Geneva to increase liaison with NGOs;

(b) Notices of various meetings should be sent to NGOs in advance so that they can have sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements;

(c) UNCHS should issue a newsletter containing information on such topics as initiatives taken by NGOs and Governments, services available from NGOs, projects, and forthcoming meetings around the world on human settlements;

(d) UNCHS should be more active in work related to the right to housing;

(e) More emphasis should be given to work promoting government/non-government cooperation at the international level.

VI. OTHER MATTERS

53. The purpose of triennial evaluation reviews is to assess the extent of the implementation of CPC recommendations, three years after they have been adopted. They are consequently restricted in their coverage of issues. However, some regional units consider that rigid adherence to this purpose may prevent the triennial review from becoming a useful aid in responding to new challenges that have arisen in the intervening years.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

54. CPC may wish to adopt the following recommendations.

Recommendations concerning human settlements

55. Recommendation 1: UNCHS and the regional units should jointly identify and agree on their respective roles, and on appropriate mechanisms for coordinating their activities. The results of this agreement should be used to assist the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II in drafting the relevant section of the Plan of Action, and in joint consultations regarding the implementation of Chapter 7 of Agenda 21 (see para. 18 above).

56. Recommendation 2: UNCHS and the regional units should systematically solicit views of governmental experts and NGOs in the preparatory stages of the programme planning process, and reflect these views in the proposed work programmes submitted to intergovernmental bodies (see para. 34 above).

57. Recommendation 3: UNCHS and the regional units should adopt, to the extent that resources permit, the suggestions made by national focal points and NGOs listed in section V of the present report (see paras. 51-52).

58. Recommendation 4: The Chairman of CPC may wish to inform the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II of decisions taken by CPC on coordination in human settlements at this session and in connection with its review of the cross-organizational programme analysis on human settlements at its twenty-fourth, twenty-sixth, twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth sessions.

Recommendations concerning evaluation process

59. Recommendation 5: Future recommendations on the review of in-depth evaluation reports should request the Chairman of CPC to transmit these reports and the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on them directly to the chairmen of the relevant bodies, rather than having the requests routed through the secretariat (see para. 50).

60. Recommendation 6: In order for the triennial evaluation review to help units concerned to meet new challenges, future triennial reviews should be expanded, as needed, to address a small number of new relevant issues in addition to their primary purpose of assessing the extent of implementation of CPC recommendations made three years before. If such needs arise, the secretariat should obtain the approval of CPC one year prior to the scheduled CPC review of the relevant triennial review report (see para. 53).

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/45/16), para. 355.

2/ Ibid., para. 356.

3/ Ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/37/38), para. 362.

4/ Ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/44/16), para. 317.

5/ "Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on in-depth evaluation of the major programme on human settlements" (HS/C/13/14/Add.2), para. 11.

6/ Ibid., para. 16.

7/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/44/7), para. 11.2.

8/ Ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/39/38), para. 223.

9/ Report of the Secretary-General on a United Nations conference on human settlements (Habitat II) (A/47/360), para. 81.

10/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/46/8), annex I, sect. A.